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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON  
TO RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5548

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000112

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, G/AIAG, OES:ACOVINGTON  
PACOM FOR FPA  
USDA FOR FAS/PECAD, FAS/CNMP, FAS/AAD, APHIS;  
BANGKOK FOR USAID: JMACARTHUR, APHIS:NCARDENAS, REO:JWALLER

E.O. 12958:N/A  
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [SENV](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BIO](#) [KFLU](#) [BM](#)  
SUBJECT: BURMA: NO COORDINATION WITH REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS ON AI

REF: A) Vientiane 101 B) Bangkok 267

RANGOON 00000112 001.4 OF 002

11. (SBU) Summary. The Burmese Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) has confirmed that despite outbreaks in neighboring countries, there have been no new outbreaks of avian influenza in 2008. LBVD officials continue to monitor border areas close to Thailand, Bangladesh, and Laos. The Burmese Government does not coordinate directly with neighboring governments on AI issues. Instead, LBVD offices increase surveillance in vulnerable areas and work with customs officials to ensure that poultry products from infected countries do not enter Burma. End Summary.

No New AI Cases  
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12. (SBU) U Maung Maung Nyunt, Director General of the Burmese Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD), confirmed that there have been no new outbreaks of AI in 2008 within Burma. Burma's last case of AI occurred in December in Eastern Shan State, where a seven-year old girl contracted Burma's first case of human AI. LBVD officials continue to improve coordination with Ministry of Health officials to monitor those living in AI-infected areas, he informed us. By conducting swab and sero tests in more than 300 townships, LBVD officials closely monitor the health of poultry, U Maung Maung Nyunt emphasized. To date, LBVD has confirmed no new AI outbreaks in Burma in 2008.

No Government Coordination  
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14. (SBU) Despite the close proximity of recent AI outbreaks in Thailand, Bangladesh, and Laos (reftels), the Burmese Government does not coordinate with neighboring countries on AI outbreaks. Instead, it only takes measures inside of Burma. LBVD officials are willing to share information, but other countries are not, U Maung Maung Nyunt claimed. Once the LBVD head office in Nay Pyi Taw learns of an outbreak in a neighboring country, it communicates with local LBVD offices in the border areas, putting them on high alert. These local offices then ramp up their monitoring and surveillance of backyard and commercial poultry farms. Local LBVD officials also routinely conduct sample and swab tests of domestic, commercial, and wild fowl in the border areas to determine if they carry H5N1.

15. (SBU) In principle, the Burmese Government bans all imports of poultry and poultry products from AI-infected countries. Products from China, Thailand, Laos, Bangladesh, and India are subject to this ban. Further reinforcing the ban, the GOB does not issue import licenses to border traders for poultry products. In reality, however, live chickens and ducks are often traded freely across

Burma's borders, most frequently with China and Thailand. LBVD officials continue to work with Customs officials to enforce GOB poultry import regulations and educate them on the dangers of AI.

Comment

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16. (SBU) All of Burma's neighbors continue to report new AI outbreaks. LBVD remains on high alert, monitoring border areas for any new cases. However, internal action on AI is not enough; countries should share information about AI outbreaks to prevent the spread of the disease. We will continue to encourage LBVD to work with its counterparts in neighboring countries and share information, such as gene sequencing of both animal and human infections. Perhaps with improved coordination, regional AI officials can pinpoint and target the source of the infection.

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